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**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**SUBJECT:** Briefing of the Chairman, House Armed Forces Committee

1. In response to the Chairman's request [redacted] Deputy Director for Strategic and Defensive Systems, DSR&E/OSD) and the undersigned met with him on 24 July 1964 to discuss the reliability of Soviet and US intercontinental ballistic missiles.

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2. In the briefing, the following points were brought out:

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b. The Soviet ICBMs are all liquid fueled, comparable in that respect to the US Titan and Atlas missiles. Their testing records and payloads are generally comparable. These large, complicated missiles are slowly being phased out of the US inventory; on the other hand, the new Soviet ICBMs being tested are still liquid fueled.

c. The Soviets do not have a solid-fueled ICBM comparable to the Minuteman. They could not, therefore, achieve the reaction times with their missile force that the US can with the Minuteman.

d. The new Soviet ICBMs will probably be able to carry substantially greater payloads than the existing systems. This means warheads with greater yields can be programmed or that multiple warheads can be used. It also means that decoys and other penetration aids can be included. So far,

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e. The US and the USSR have followed greatly different ICBM deployment concepts. The US force is widely dispersed and most of it is hardened. Moreover, the Minuteman missile which makes up the greatest part of the US force is launched from the silo. Probably for reasons of speed and economy (and perhaps because the Soviets did not expect their precise locations to become known), the Soviet ICBMs are deployed in relatively smaller complexes than those of the US, with two or three launchers per site; only about a third of the Soviets' 230 launchers now operational or under construction are hardened. So far as we can tell, all of the Soviet ICBMs now deployed in silos must be lifted to the surface prior to launch. The Soviets appear to be turning to a dispersed single-silo mode of ICBM deployment, but it will be a long time before this accounts for most of their force.

f. The Soviet submarine-launched ballistic missile program bears little resemblance to the highly successful US Polaris program. Soviet ballistic-missile submarines carry only three weapons, compared to 16 on US ships. The range of the Polaris is substantially greater than the Soviet missile, and only one or two of the existing Soviet fleet units can fire while submerged as the Polaris submarines do. The Soviets may convert their ballistic-missile submarines to fire a longer-range weapon, but they do not appear to be constructing any more submarines to fire ballistic missiles.

3. Although the US and Soviet ICBMs were compared and discussed in the manner indicated above, the Chairman did not ask for the estimates on overall reliability of either the Soviet or US systems. As a result, no direct comparisons of overall reliability were made. The Chairman touched on the missile vs. manned bomber issue in passing, but called for no discussion of the matter.

4. The Chairman concluded the meeting with the observation that it appeared that the US and Soviet ICBMs were about equally reliable and that even if only half of the Soviet ICBMs reached their targets in the US there would still be terrible devastation. This meant to him, he said, that they must never be used. And this meant that the US must remain strong and not get trigger-happy.

SIGNED

**BRUCE CLARKE**Chief, Military Division  
Current Intelligence

## Attachments

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<p>Attached is a memo on reliability of Soviet ICBMs, which was prepared in response to a question from Congressman Vinson. The DCI thinks that this should be given orally, and that no document should be left, if possible. Bruce Clarke can handle such a briefing, but R.J. Smith is available if you need him.</p>			
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